

## **Guilbeault urges compromise; Environment ministers try to get biodiversity talks on track in final days**

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### **Body**

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A successful biodiversity framework to halt the devastation of global ecosystems and wildlife will require compromise from the world's wealthy and developing nations both, Canada's environment minister said Thursday.

Steven Guilbeault is helping guide international nature talks toward a conclusion, with Canada hosting the COP15 in Montreal despite China remaining the president and chief architect of the summit.

After negotiations temporarily stopped Wednesday amid an impasse over how a resulting framework would be funded, they resumed Wednesday evening and Guilbeault said he is feeling confident that progress is now underway.

But there remains a chasm between wealthier nations and developing countries, with the former demanding a target to protect at least 30 per cent of the world's land and marine areas by 2030 and the latter demanding that the wealthiest countries come up with more cash to pay for it.

A framework won't happen unless both things are included, said Guilbeault.

"Those of us who want ambition, in the north, certainly need to understand that we need to be serious about resource mobilization, and those countries in the south who want resources to be mobilized need to understand that there won't be money unless there's ambition," he said.

The Montreal talks began Dec. 6 with country negotiators taking the lead, and government ministers arrived Thursday for a three-day "high-level segment" aimed at bringing the toughest issues to a consensus.

Guilbeault said the hope is that a compromise agreement will be ready by Sunday, a day before the meeting is supposed to end.

But the finance issue still looms large, as does the amount of money required.

Estimates suggest \$700 billion (U.S.) a year is needed to properly conserve nature.

About \$200 billion of that would come from contributions from governments, the private sector and charities, while the rest could be achieved by redirecting government subsidies that harm nature, such as those for fossil-fuel projects.

That is on top of the commitment to fund climate action and adaptation measures at \$100 billion a year.

Developed countries are adamant that they cannot fund it all.

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"It's doable, but not just with public money," Guilbeault said in an interview with The Canadian Press.

Developed countries are counting on private-sector financing and philanthropy to help bridge the gap, though Guilbeault acknowledged that the business case isn't as easy to make for conserving nature as it is for developing clean technology to help slow climate change.

Lord Zac Goldsmith, the British minister for international environment and climate, said Thursday that to put the size of the need into perspective, the annual total of all government aid for everything - not just nature and climate - is \$160 billion.

"So even if we quadrupled all global aid and put all of it into nature, we still wouldn't quite get there in terms of closing that gap," Goldsmith said.

Canada and the U.K. were among a group of developed nations that issued what they called a "donor statement" on Thursday, trying to prove they aren't falling down on financing commitments.

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